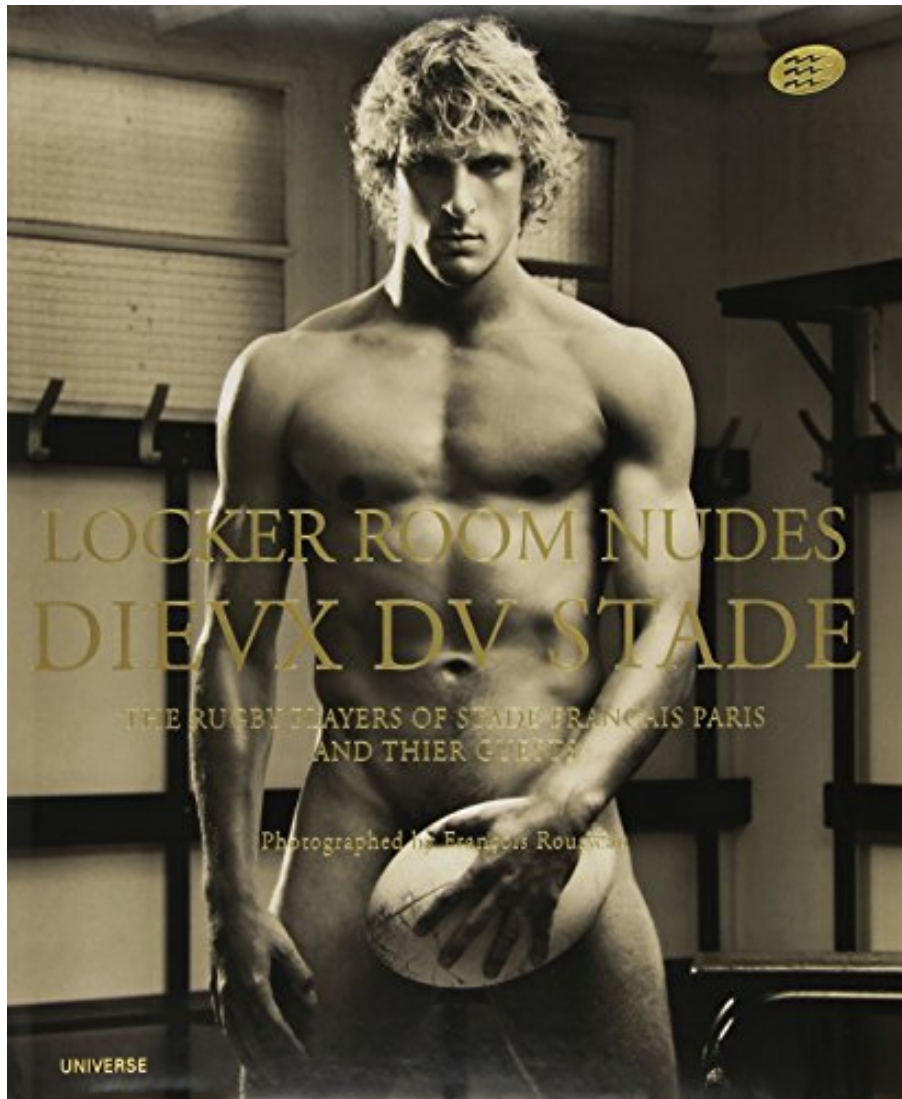


**LOCKER ROOM NUDES / DIEUX DU STADE:
THE RUGBY PLAYERS OF STADE
FRANCAIS PARIS AND THEIR GUESTS
FROM UNIVERSE**



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About the Author

François Rousseau was born in France in 1967. He spent ten years as an artist before beginning his photography career in 1995. Since then, his work has been commissioned by numerous magazines in Paris. He often incorporates athletes, musicians and artists in his photos and currently alternates between commercial fashion photography and art photography.

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This remarkable collection of candid nude photos of France's national rugby team goes beneath the uniform to reveal what real jocks look like underneath it all. Each image taken by leading French photographer François Rousseau depicts the rugby player—alone or with teammates—undressing, lounging on the bench, showering. Locker Room Men is at once a celebration of athletes and the beauty of the male form as well as the fulfillment of the fantasy of going behind the scenes in a winning team's locker room.

Sure to appeal to both gay men and straight women, these photos are unusual because the men are not models. They don't work out just to look good—and look good they do—their bodies are sculpted by winning victories on the field. They aren't made up, shaved, or prettified in any way. These are some of the world's best rugby players—brawny, tough, competitive.

Since 1999, the French national rugby team has posed nude or semi-nude for an annual calendar. The purpose behind the calendar was to get wider “exposure” for rugby and the team. In 2004, François Rousseau was selected as photographer, and he successfully brought out the sensual beauty and sexiness inherent in the rugby players' rough and tumble exterior. The calendar became a cult hit, and thus the book was born so that even more of these unparalleled images could be savored.

Whether or not rugby will become more popular in this country remains to be seen, but this book will certainly raise the game's profile...

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Most helpful customer reviews

84 of 86 people found the following review helpful.

Awesome Display

By Felixpath

There are two major kinds of power: physical power and social power. "Locker Room Nudes" is a book about men who have both. The rugby players of Stade Français Paris are the elite of the elite, one of Europe's

premiere teams in one of its premiere sports. Playing one of the toughest and most physically challenging games in the world has honed their bodies to perfection, and their championship wins have turned them into gods among France's sporting crowd. They are almost a force of nature. "Locker Room Nudes" is a beautiful celebration of their power.

This hefty book collects the (mostly) nude photos of the rugby players that have been taken by photographer François Rousseau for their annual wall calendar. The men are shown in the locker room as well as the weight room, the shower, the stadium, and even the toilet. The book's one flaw, as others have pointed out, is that it claims to present a "candid" view of these men. There is nothing "candid" about the photos -- each one is carefully posed and shot, usually (though not always) so the naughty parts are obscured. Besides, it's unrealistic to assume that the rugby team would spend so much time in the buff in real life. What IS true is that they are photographed in natural lighting, with no makeup, shaving, or "prettifying." They are often shown streaked with mud and sweat, as though they've just come in from a game. And it's impossible to deny that they are still achingly beautiful men. Ranging from lathesome models like Julian Hans (p. 128-135) to hulking man-mountains such as Ignacio Corleto (p. 20-21) and Regis Sigoire (p. 148), they represent every possible image of the ideal man.

Yes, this book has aspects that some people don't like. The "atmospheric" shots of an empty hallway and locker room do distract from the nudes, but they take up so little of the book that it barely matters. I don't have any problem with the collection of head-shots that appear partway through -- after all, the face counts as a naked body part as well, and many of these men are very handsome. Photographing a man's face, so close that we can see every strand of stubble on his jaw, presents just as intimate an image as the same man's nude body. And, yes, there is a homoerotic undercurrent to many of the images: men are shown hanging out together in the nude, casually embracing, and wrestling on the muddy floor. Common sense says that most if not all of these men are straight. However, they must know that their photos have a large following among gay men, and it's kind of nice to see them acknowledging that. Besides, these rugby players do share a powerful bond of trust and camaraderie. They have won this much and come this far by putting their faith in each other. They have few secrets from each other. The fact that they feel comfortable enough to take off all their clothes and exchange a manly hug for the camera shows what a bloody good team they are. I don't believe there's anything sexual in that.

"Locker Room Nudes" is above all, a display of raw beauty. Certain photos stand out. On pages 10 and 11, Daniel Browne strips off his shirt to reveal a torso that many athletes would kill for. Clement Poitrenaud strides up the stadium steps on p. 44-45, his flawless body streaked with sweat (or is it rainwater?) and we can almost hear the noise of the adoring crowd. Moise Santamaria kickboxes on p. 64-67, and fearlessly bares all in a defiantly erotic pose. On p. 98-99, the Bergamasco brothers, Mirco and Mauro, square off, their chiseled forms and curly hair making them look like they just stepped from an Olympian mural of ancient Greece. Fabien Galthie kisses a championship plaque on p. 103, drunk on power and glory. Yannick Larguet is caught running with the ball on p. 120-121, muscles taut, an athlete in his element. The jaw-droppingly gorgeous Frederic Cermeno visits the shower on p. 136-139, and I for one would pay big money for the privilege of toweling him dry. The soapy hot tub embrace between Regis Sigoire and Jeremie Ballais on p. 147 is so erotic that the two would have to work hard to convince people they weren't lovers.

And, at the very beginning of the book, we see a dark room pierced by a doorway through which brilliant light spills. A naked man stands in the doorway, silhouetted; a second man is almost hidden in shadow to his right. The picture is an invitation to enter that doorway, to see what is merely being hinted at in the image. "Locker Room Nudes" is a fantasy given life. Flipping through these glossy pages, we can imagine that we are truly there, that we have been given the chance of a lifetime, that we are the honored guests of these strong, beautiful, confident men.

That's real power.

58 of 68 people found the following review helpful.

Outstanding models and photography, but a mediocre book.

By Invisiboy

I am a big fan of the Dieux de Stade DVDs, and I was all psyched up about the book finally coming out in the States. But I must admit I am disappointed. Only a few models show the full monty (the sexiest model Frederic Deltour does, thank God! Yowsa!), and there are far too many pages of empty locker rooms and spreads with no models in the photos. What's the point? Seems like a waste of precious space, especially since there are many fantastic shots of these beautiful models that could have been included. Most of the shots here are pretty good, but the book leaves much to be desired. It could have been so much better.

16 of 17 people found the following review helpful.

Beautiful but coy

By James C. Steward

Elegantly photographed, these obviously staged photographs are a big tease: yes, the publisher and team make clear that one shouldn't expect much by way of explicit images, and nothing that is more than R-rated. But the constant play with the homoerotic is cloying after a while: macho camaraderie is one thing, for an athlete. What appear to be poses struck for the sake of a presumed gay readership is somehow condescending after a while. Even so, the photographs are beautifully lit and framed, the men are beautiful and just real enough (though "unstaged"? please. in the video we see the makeup being applied!), and the production standards are superlative.

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